

I confess that this question as to the nature and foundation of our scientific classifications appears to me to have the deepest importance, an importance far greater indeed than is usually attached to it. If it can be proved that man has not invented, but only traced this systematic arrangement in nature, that these relations and proportions which exist throughout the animal and vegetable world have an intellectual, an ideal connection in the mind of the Creator, that this plan of creation, which so commends itself to our highest wisdom, has not grown out of the necessary action of physical laws, but was the free conception of the Almighty Intellect, matured in his thought, before it was manifested in tangible external forms,—if, in short, we can prove premeditation prior to the act of creation, we have done, once and for ever, with the desolate theory which refers us to the laws of matter as accounting for all the wonders of the universe, and leaves us with no God but the monotonous, unvarying action of physical forces, binding all things to their inevitable destiny.¹ I think our science has now reached that degree of advancement, in which we may venture upon such an investigation.

The argument for the existence of an intelligent Creator is generally drawn from

¹ I allude here only to the doctrines of materialists; but I feel it necessary to add, that there are physicists, who might be shocked at the idea of being considered as materialists, who are yet prone to believe that when they have recognized the laws which regulate the physical world, and acknowledged that these laws were established by the Deity, they have explained every thing, even when they have considered only the phenomena of the inorganic world, as if the world contained no living beings and as if these living beings exhibited nothing that differed from the inorganic world. Mistaking for a causal relation the intellectual connection observable between serial phenomena, they are unable to perceive any difference between disorder and the free, independent, and self-possessed action of a superior mind, and call mysticism, even a passing allusion to the existence of an immaterial principle in animals, which they acknowledge themselves in man. [POWELL'S *Essays*, etc., p. 478, 385, and 466.] I would further remark, that, when speaking of creation in contradistinction with reproduction, I mean only to allude to the difference there is between the regular course of phenomena in nature and the establishment of that order of things, without attempting to explain either;

for in whatever manner any state of things which has prevailed for a time upon earth may have been introduced, it is self-evident that its establishment and its maintenance for a determined period are two very different things, however frequently they may be mistaken as identical. It is further of itself plain that the laws which may explain the phenomena of the material world, in contradistinction from the organic, cannot be considered as accounting for the existence of living beings, even though these have a material body, unless it be actually shown that the action of these laws implies by their very nature the production of such beings. Thus far, Cross's experiments are the only ones offered as proving such a result. I do not know what physicists may think about them now; but I know that there is scarcely a zoölogist who doubts that they only exhibited a mistake. Life in appropriating the physical world to itself with all its peculiar phenomena exhibits, however, some of its own and of a higher order, which cannot be explained by physical agencies. The circumstance that life is so deeply rooted in the inorganic nature, affords, nevertheless, a strong temptation to explain one by the other; but we shall see presently how fallacious these attempts have been.